

CfP: History and Humour – 1800 to Present
International Conference at Freiburg University, 6-7 July 2012.

One tends to associate history with serious modes of presentation (academic, heroic, tragic) rather than with humorous ones. Yet Clio also smiles and laughs out loud: Comic renderings of historical events and figures have made a significant contribution to 'popular' history since around 1800. We find them in all European cultures and in a wide range of texts, images and performances, in styles both coarse and refined. History has been the subject of caricature, satire, the cartoon and comic book, stage and television/film comedy, and the parody history textbook as exemplified in the British classic, *1066 and All That*. There are special national traditions which the conference seeks to explore and compare. But it will also address questions of a more general nature. Theories of humour are diverse but agree in a number of elements: On the intellectual level, laughter seems to be an elementary reaction to incompatible or contradictory frames of reference and interpretation. On the emotional level, laughter releases apprehension and tension, and it discharges feelings of aggression and contempt. It is aroused by the deformed and unfamiliar, it exposes and punishes the unsocial, and it deflates the grand.

To what purpose have such elements been employed in the humorous presentation of history? From what contexts do humorous presentations arise? At what audiences are they directed, and how have they been received?

We invite participants who would like to explore these and other questions with reference to specific case studies from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. 300-word proposals in English should be sent to the organisers (Barbara Korte, English Department and Elisabeth Cheauré, Slavic Department) by **15 October 2011**:

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For information on our research group *Historische Lebenswelten* please see
<http://portal.uni-freiburg.de/historische-lebenswelten>